
SURREY COMMUNITY FLOOD RESILIENCE PROJECT

FINAL REPORT 2018

Name of area: SURREY

Name of Council: SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

Reporting period: MAY 2016 to MAY 2018



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Surrey Community Flood Resilience Project was started after several communities in Surrey were flooded in 2013/2014 and in 2016. The project was designed to engage all partners within the Risk Management Authorities to raise awareness and understanding of flood risk and to encourage local communities to take the lead and identify opportunities to reduce their flood risk and become more resilient. The communities, with the support of the National Flood Forum, formed six Flood Action Groups within pre-identified areas: ■■■, ■■■, ■■■, ■■■, ■■■, and ■■■.

The Flood Action Groups developed their own flood action plans and the National Flood Forum facilitated regular Multi-Agency Meetings between the groups and Risk Management Authorities. Some of the Flood Action Groups started the process of creating Flood Emergency Resilience Plans to look at what the community identified would help them to support themselves in any future flood event and developed information sharing events with the wider community (for riparian owners, planning and development issues, ditch maintenance work, etc).

The Flood Action Groups established in Surrey developed a better understanding of their flood risk and felt better informed about the management of flood risk in their area due to the conversations during the Multi-Agency Meetings. They agreed that they had received support, signposting and practical advice regarding all topics relating to flood risk by the National Flood Forum and the Risk Management Authorities. They also confirmed that they had built positive partnerships with the Risk Management Authorities and were confident that they will at some stage write their own Flood Resilience Emergency Plan.

This report highlights several recommendations and lessons learned that should assist organisations in Surrey to engage successfully with communities and Flood Action Groups as well as some key risks that were identified and need to be considered when engaging with Flood Action Groups.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The **National Flood Forum** is a national charity dedicated to supporting and representing communities and individuals at risk of flooding. It supports people to prepare for flooding, to better prevent it or mitigate its impacts. The National Flood Forum helps people to recover their normal lives once they have been flooded and advises and supports them on the issues that they are confronted with when at flood risk. It works on behalf of flood risk communities to highlight national concerns and engages with government and agencies to help them to develop a community perspective. The bulk of the National Flood Forum's work is spent supporting communities across England and Wales, with the Scottish Flood Forum covering Scotland.

The National Flood Forum's philosophy is based around empowering communities to take the lead on flood awareness and reducing their community's flood risk through working in partnership with relevant partner organisations. It builds community confidence and helps instil community pro-activity, as well as a willingness to work in partnership to reduce people's fear and anxiety. It helps to increase peoples' hope for life with a reduced risk of the consequences of flooding.

The process used empowers communities by bringing flood affected residents together to form core Flood Action Groups, encourages them to take the lead, ensures that their local expertise is heard, and that they are involved and consulted on future proposals that affect flooding in their area. Support is provided to create a focus and structure and tools are given to sustain the group. Explanations of roles, responsibilities, constraints and structure of county and district councils, Highways Authorities, the Environment Agency, water companies and parish and town councils are provided, and engagement skills instilled with the emphasis on a positive way forward. Finally, the process involves bringing together those that manage flood risk collectively with the community to form a partnership that includes those at grass-roots.

Context

Communities throughout Surrey suffered severe flooding during the winter months of 2013 and into the early part of 2014. The exceptional conditions were caused by a westerly Atlantic flow dominating the weather, bringing a series of deep low-pressure systems across the UK, with very little respite between them. This made it the stormiest period of weather that the UK had seen for at least 20 years (MET Office, 2017). Surrey received over two and a half times the amount of rainfall that they would normally expect during this time of year (Surrey County Council, 2015). Many residents were affected by internal flooding and faced the prospect of moving out of what was left of their homes for several months. Subsequently those individuals were left traumatised by their experiences. During 2016 the communities of ■■■ and ■■■ in ■■■ experienced pluvial flooding due to concentrated high intensity rainfall events. Many properties were flooded internally, with several having foul water inundating their homes. Surrey County Council called on the National Flood Forum to provide immediate recovery support to all parts of Surrey affected.

■■■■, ■■■■ in ■■■■ and several other areas in Surrey were identified as part of a county wide community flood resilience project. The project was designed to engage all partners to raise awareness and understanding of flood risk and to encourage local communities to take the lead and identify opportunities to reduce their flood risk and becoming more resilient. The National Flood Forum was asked to participate as part of the project to work across selected areas in Surrey, namely, ■■■■, ■■■■, ■■■■, ■■■■, ■■■■, ■■■■.

This report outlines the National Flood Forum’s work as part of the Surrey Community Flood Resilience Project within these areas.

1.2 Project objectives and deliverables

This project aimed to put in place a more organised response to flooding across communities in Surrey. This was through the use of innovative community engagement work across the county to develop a self-sufficient network of resilience groups, in partnership with key agencies. This approach to engaging with communities was in line with the objectives of Surrey County Council’s Flood Risk Management Strategy.

Surrey County Council and the National Flood Forum worked to create collaborative working engagement with communities. The aims and objectives of the approach were that both partners would work together to reach common goals, one culture of partnering, trust, and the sharing of ideas and resources.

1.2.1 Objectives

Project objectives:

The objectives of the project were:

- 1) “The National Flood Forum will engage partners to raise awareness and understanding of flood risk and encourage local communities to take the lead and identify opportunities to reduce their flood risk and becoming more resilient.
- 2) To achieve this the National Flood Forum will work with communities to create new Flood Action Groups and support the development of community flood plans including agreed programmes of work. These programmes of work will be set and scrutinised by the Surrey Community Resilience Partnership.
- 3) The National Flood Forum will support communities to identify and implement local measures to reduce flood risk in conjunction with partners.”

Objectives for the Local National Flood Forum Project Officer:

- 1) “Helping communities to understand that they are at risk of flooding.
- 2) Helping to empower people to prepare for flooding in order to prevent or mitigate its impacts.
- 3) Providing guidance on resilience and resistance to ensure the identified communities have taken steps to prepare for flooding.

- 4) Creating and facilitating sustainable community flood groups to work in partnership to ensure the community can respond and have taken steps to reduce the impact of flooding. To include the creating and completion of community flood plans.
- 5) Providing practical advice and support to communities.
- 6) Signposting to services and professionals.
- 7) Providing feedback on community situations and concerns to relevant agencies.”

1.2.2 Deliverables

The following deliverables were itemised:

“Task 1: Advisory/Training Role:

- I. Provision of specialist training and advice to agency and community leads from across Surrey.*
- II. Act as an advisor and deliver practical advice on community resilience activities across Surrey.*

Task 2: Strategic Role:

- I. Provision of specialist advice connected to development of the refresh 2016 Flood Risk Management Strategy*
- II. Provision of specialist advice around central Government departmental issues connected to flooding.*

Task 3: Local engagement:

- I. The communities are identified in conjunction with the Surrey Community Resilience Partnership:*

The National Flood Forum and Surrey Community Resilience Partnership discuss and prioritise potential areas at flood risk that would benefit from National Flood Forum support.

- II. The communities know they are at risk:*

Members of communities with no previous National Flood Forum engagement have been approached regarding their flood risk and given an opportunity to become involved with a flood action group.

- III. The Community start to prepare:*

- Flood Action Groups have been established; minimum of 5
- Flood Action Groups have engaged with their wider community
- Engagement with flood risk managers has been achieved
- Community resilience plan has been discussed with all groups
- Development of community flood plans has commenced for most of the groups

- IV. They can respond:*

- Some of the Flood Action Groups have led an awareness event for their wider community to promote themselves, flood risk and partnership working.
- A community flood plan has been created by at least three communities with support and guidance from the NFF and other risk management authorities.
- Delivery of training packages in conjunction with risk management authorities for community groups, as identified by the local communities.

- Exercise to test community flood plan has been carried out for at least one group, where this is appropriate.

V. Report and Evaluation

VI. Future Works

1.3 Changes to the project

During the Surrey Community Resilience Project, several changes arose. At the inception of this project, six areas had been identified for National Flood Forum engagement: ■■■, ■■■, ■■■, ■■■, ■■■ and ■■■. However, it became apparent in ■■■ that, despite engagement with the ■■■ Action Group, residents did not want to create a Flood Action Group. This project risk was discussed with Surrey County Council during a project steering group meeting and subsequently the decision was made to cease engagement in ■■■ and efforts were diverted elsewhere.

Section 1.2.2 outlines the project deliverables for local engagement. Three of these, outlined below, had been altered as part of project discussions with Surrey County Council:

- *Development of community Flood Emergency Resilience Plans has commenced for most groups.*
- *A community Flood Emergency Resilience Plan has been created by at least three communities with support and guidance from the National Flood Forum and other risk management authorities.*
- *Exercise to test community Flood Emergency Resilience Plan has been carried out for at least one group, where this is appropriate.*

During the development of the Flood Action Groups, it became clear that they wanted to focus on the management of flood risk first and foremost. The development of Flood Emergency Resilience Plans was discussed with all the Flood Action Groups, but they feel that they are not ready to undertake that task.

The ■■■ Flood Action Group did undertake a resilience plan alongside the emergency management team in ■■■. However, this group became overwhelmed with the task and subsequently decided to stop working on it. This set individuals and the group back with regards their trust in authorities. The group decided to continue with their partnership meetings focusing on reducing their risk.

Therefore, taking into account the opinions of all Flood Action Groups and the lessons learnt from the experience of the ■■■ Flood Action Group, the project risk was discussed with Surrey County Council during a project steering group meeting and subsequently the decision was made to continue Flood Action Groups with their partnership approach managing flood risk rather than pursuing the development of Flood Emergency Resilience Plans.

2. APPROACH: AWARENESS RAISING, FORMATION OF FLOOD ACTION GROUPS, MULTI-AGENCY MEETINGS, AWARENESS EVENTS AND FLOOD RESILIENCE PLANS

The National Flood Forum worked in partnership with Surrey County Council, district and parish councils, the Environment Agency, Highways Authority and water companies to ensure that information and support was available

to the local community. It contributed towards an understanding of each other's responsibility by acting as a neutral partner, mediator and skilled practitioner on wider issues that are shared by flooded people nationally. This section identifies methods employed, information on the Flood Action Groups created, partnership meetings and Flood Emergency Resilience Plan status.

2.1 Awareness raising with both communities and partners

This project focussed on raising awareness with communities and partners largely through community engagement. This involved going into the heart of targeted areas, engaging with people at risk of flooding directly, and bringing them together to form a core Flood Action Group. Seven communities were engaged with, whilst six communities created Flood Action Groups that also developed Flood Action Plans. These provided the basis for creating a partnership with flood Risk Management Authorities that could empower Flood Action Groups to identify and contribute to implementing local measures to reduce flood risk. The Flood Action Groups were prepared for partnership engagement, charged with disseminating messages into the wider community, empowered to move issues forward in their area (and to look for ways to reduce their flood risk), leading to building community flood resilience using different approaches.

A further aspect of this project involved raising awareness and understanding amongst partners of Flood Action Groups and their role in community-led flood risk management (see section 1.2.1 and 1.2.2 for objectives and deliverables). The National Flood Forum participated in the quarterly Surrey Prepared meetings and regularly provided advice to all partners on community engagement, insurance, awareness raising, property resilience and resistance, as well as recovery.

The National Flood Forum ran a training workshop with officers from ■■■ District Council following the flooding event in 2016. This workshop covered various topics from 'the human impact of flooding' to 'scenario training'. The feedback from this workshop was positive from officers who stated that they "gained a greater understanding of how flooding effects people" and that they will be using the information from the day to "update their own communications and response" in preparation for future flood responses.

2.1.1 Awareness days

Some Flood Action Groups led an awareness event for their wider community to promote an understanding of the flood risk in their area, encourage membership of the group, and provide information with the support of the flood Risk Management Authorities partnership. ■■■ Flood Action Group held an awareness and information gathering day on Wednesday 10th May 2017 in partnership with Surrey County Council and ■■■ (Figures 2.1 and 2.2). The Flood Action Group gathered concerns from members of their community and promoted the work of the partnership they had formed, bringing about awareness of the flood risk in the area, gathering local expertise to help ■■■ gain better data. The motivation to hold this event came directly from discussions held within the Flood Action Group

partnership. The Flood Action Group led the day with support from Surrey County Council. The event was positive, attendance was high, with residents showing interest in the Flood Action Group's work and welcoming the opportunity to share their flooding concerns and personal stories. Attendees also shared with the National Flood Forum project officer that they had contributed towards the wider feasibility study in a meaningful way.

Figure 2.3 shows [redacted] Flood Action Group raising awareness of flood risk and its management at a joint stall with the [redacted] Parish Council. This stall was part of the [redacted] Carnival which was held on Saturday 10th June 2017.

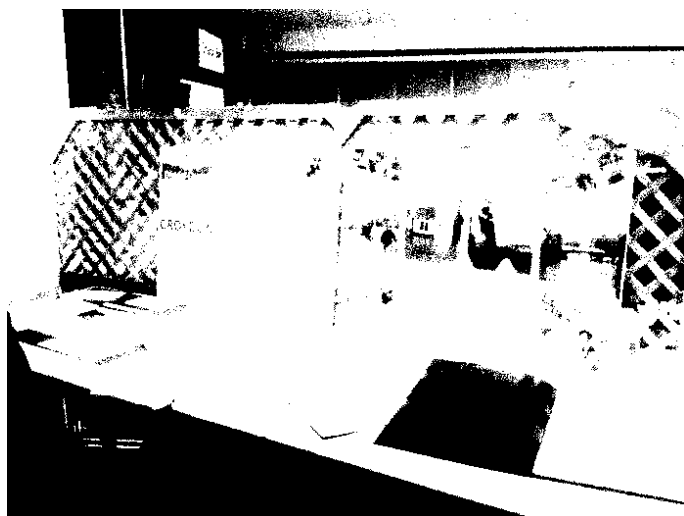


Figure 2.1: The [redacted] Flood Action Group stand at their awareness event in May 2017.



Figure 2.2: Residents from [redacted] explaining and identifying their flood risk using printed maps, during the awareness day in May 2017.



Figure 2.3: The [redacted] Flood Action Group attending the [redacted] Carnival where they raised awareness of flood risk and its management.

The [redacted] Flood Action Group held their first awareness event on Tuesday 10th October 2017 with their partnership, including Surrey County Council, Environment Agency, [redacted] Borough Council and Thames Water. The aim of the day was for the Flood Action Group to gather concerns from members of their community and promote the work of the partnership they had formed. The decision to hold this event came directly from discussions held within the Flood Action Group partnership. The Flood Action Group led the day with support from the Environment Agency. The day was positive with approximately 200 residents attending the event. As a direct result of the Flood Action Group's awareness day, the Environment Agency are remodelling their temporary defences project in the area with the scope of raising the level of the temporary defences. This was driven by the overwhelming consensus from the community that the current levels were not high enough.

The [redacted] Flood Action Group have shown interest in leading an awareness event involving their partnership and are aiming for a date late Summer 2018. The Environment Agency asked if it would be appropriate for them to demonstrate the flood defences alongside the event to which the Flood Action Grouped agreed. Some members of the group have links to local resident associations, which has allowed the Flood Action Group to attend a Christmas Fair and other similar events in Winter 2017 and Spring 2018.

2.2 Development of Flood Action Groups

The Flood Action Groups that were formed as part of this project are composed of flood affected residents that are representative of the wider community, including the elderly and vulnerable. The Flood Action Groups were

empowered to understand and take ownership of local flood risk and Flood Action Plans were developed, capturing local knowledge. The National Flood Forum facilitated Multi-Agency Meetings to create working partnerships between communities and Risk Management Authorities. Some of the Flood Action Groups started the process of creating Flood Emergency Resilience Plans to look at what the community identified would help them to support themselves in any future flood event.

The project had specific objectives and deliverables for the National Flood Forum at the community level, outlined in sections 1.2.1 and 1.2.2. During the project, six Flood Action Groups were created:

- [Redacted] Flood Action Group
- [Redacted] Centre Flood Action Group
- [Redacted] Flood Action Group
- [Redacted] Flood Action Group (previously known as [Redacted] Flood Action Group)
- [Redacted] Flood Action Group
- [Redacted] Flood Action Group

All the above Flood Action Groups understood that they are at risk from various sources of flooding, they were continually engaged through their partnership meetings to ensure that their community could respond and took steps to reduce the impact of flooding.

2.3 Resilience planning

As outlined in section 1.2.2, an objective of this project was for the development of Flood Emergency Resilience Plans to have commenced for the majority of the Flood Action Groups. A 'Flood Emergency Resilience Plan' is mutually understood by the National Flood Forum, Surrey County Council and other Surrey Prepared partners to be a document in which a community has outlined their actions just before, during and, where appropriate, after a flood. This is intended to enable faster and better local coordination and support during a flood event and reduced demand on available emergency services resources during the initial stages of an incident.

The [Redacted] Flood Action Group started work on their Flood Emergency Resilience Plan with the support of the National Flood Forum and the [Redacted] Parish Council. This work was funded by the [Redacted] Parish Council.

The [Redacted] Flood Action Group started to develop their Flood Emergency Resilience Plan with Surrey County Council and [Redacted] Borough Council. They followed an alternative approach and template to community resilience planning from that used by the National Flood Forum. [Redacted] Flood Action Group felt that this approach caused stress and contention within the Group and it was concluded at a meeting with the Flood Risk Management Authorities and the Emergency Planning team that the template provided was not suitable for this Flood Action Group. The Flood Action Group discontinued writing the plan and created an information leaflet for the wider community instead.

Although four Flood Action Groups did not begin to develop a Flood Emergency Resilience Plan, there is a bigger picture to consider. When Flood Action Groups create partnerships with agencies and authorities who manage flood risk, they are already taking the first steps towards a more resilient community. Communities that engage and work in partnership to reduce their flood risk, engage their wider community, create trusted organisational linkages and boost social support. All of this requires flexibility, decision making skills and trusted sources of information on both sides of the partnership between Flood Action Groups and the Flood Risk Management Authorities. It is crucial for Flood Action Groups to build a foundation of trust with Flood Risk Management Authorities in managing their flood risk first, before they become increasingly resilient and start developing Flood Emergency Resilient Plans.

Members of the [REDACTED] Flood Action Group, the [REDACTED] Flood Action Group and the [REDACTED] Flood Action Group wished to use their time to address local infrastructure and maintenance issues that were exacerbating their flood risk.

“We feel much of the problem is a lack of maintenance and people get very angry being given sandbags if they think nothing is being done to stop the cause”

Member of the [REDACTED] Flood Action Group

3. BENEFITS OF THE NATIONAL FLOOD FORUM AND FLOOD ACTION GROUPS

The National Flood Forum has a track record of going into the heart of flood risk areas, engaging with the community, and bringing them together to form a core group. The Forum supports the group with the initial work that is needed to prepare for partnership engagement with agencies and institutions and the group is charged with disseminating messages out into their wider community. These communities then feel empowered to move issues forward positively in the area, looking for ways to reduce their flood risk and prepare for a potential future flood event.

The flexibility and patience needed in responding and delivering support to communities should not be underestimated. Many of the DEFRA Pathfinder reports documented that facilitators, such as the National Flood Forum, had to be increasingly involved with the initial set up and running of Flood Action Groups to ensure that the groups developed their confidence, before embarking on tasks to manage flooding, its impacts or preparing for an incident. This investment was essential to both the success and long-term sustainability of the groups. The National Flood Forum approach and methodology was used to engage in areas of Surrey, that had been previously understood as ‘hard to engage’ by many other authorities.

During this project, the National Flood Forum undertook a Flood Action Group survey. Flood Group members were asked a series of questions relating to their Multi-Agency Meetings, the National Flood Forum, and the extent to which the project has benefited them and their community. The results are listed below and in Appendix B of this report:

- ✓ **80% of respondents agreed that they understand their flood risk better because of their Multi-Agency Meetings**
- ✓ **93.3% of respondents agreed that they understand and feel increasingly informed of how flood risk is managed in their local area**
- ✓ **80% of respondents agreed that they have built positive partnerships with all Flood Risk Management Authorities**
- ✓ **66.6% of respondents agreed that their community has informed or supported Risk Management Authorities to reduce localised flood risk**
- ✓ **60% of respondents agreed that their community has played a positive role in reducing or managing localised flood risk**
- ✓ **86.7% of respondents agreed that they are confident that they have support from the National Flood Forum and the Risk Management Authorities to write a Flood Emergency Resilience Plan for their community if they wish to do so**
- ✓ **80% of respondents agreed that they have received support, signposting and practical advice regarding all topics relating to flood risk**

Flood Action Group members comments:

<i>"It is looking hopeful"</i>	<i>"very well"</i>
<i>"we have had one multi agency meeting which was very reassuring and informative"</i>	<i>"Great"</i>
<i>"Forward steps were made"</i>	<i>"It was great"</i>

The Multi-Agency Meeting approach was met with positivity by everyone, with much thanks expressed to all the partners involved for taking the time to work alongside flood affected residents through the Flood Action Groups. The Flood Action Groups were grateful for the support of the partners and the proactive approach in addressing issues and concerns. They also welcomed the opportunity to be involved in the development of larger projects that Surrey County Council were leading on, most notably the ████ Surface Water Feasibility Study. The Flood Action Groups were all appreciative of Surrey County Councils support by commissioning the National Flood Forum's involvement.

4. LESSONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Community engagement and Flood Action Groups

The National Flood Forum strongly encourages communities to act to better manage their flood risk. The approach advocated in many situations is to bring residents and businesses together to form Flood Action Groups and for these to work in partnership with the Risk Management Authorities. Nationally, the success of these Flood Action Groups has been seen where "grassroots" communities, the flood affected individuals and representatives, unite as a

volunteer-based and self-organised community group to plan for a resilient future. Communities need to be encouraged to lead on flood risk management, awareness and resilience for the future of their area.

This process can be encouraged by supporting Flood Action Groups to have regular Multi-Agency meetings focussing on their needs and priorities. Partnership-working between Flood Action Groups and Risk Management Authorities will deliver the best outcomes and empower the communities to become more resilient and engaged with their flood risk.

Any extra support given by Flood Action Groups such as leading awareness days can support Flood Risk Management Authorities engagement. As with the [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Flood Action Group, experience shows that the success of these events is due to them being organised and led by the Flood Action Group themselves and not following the format of a public meeting but a market stand event.

A series of guiding principles are fundamental to successful engagement, are central to the National Flood Forum's approach and are recommended as a basis for future work in Surrey (Table 4.1).

Table 4.2 identifies engagement objectives that need to be the focus during partnership work with flooded communities, and actions and indicators that signpost this. All six Flood Action Groups have reached Stage 2 indicated in Table 4.2 and have identified actions that they can take forward such as a Flood Emergency Resilience Plan, planning and development issues and targeted meetings, information sharing with riparian owners, insurance issues and how and where to signpost concerned residents, etc.

Table 4.1 National Food Forum guiding principles for working with communities

A people-centric approach	Start where the residents and community interest are, and not what is useful to you, your project’s deliverables or any other organisations.
Timescales	Work at the pace of the community. Don’t impose your timescales or deadlines.
Time	Build in time before and after meetings to talk and listen to participants.
Trust	To build strong relationships and successfully work with communities, honest and direct conversations need to be the key, including during Multi-Agency Meetings.
Understand and adapt	Before working with a Flood Action Group, invest effort to understand the context and the community, and adapt your approach to each community.
Listen	Listen to what people have to say and demonstrate that you have heard. Positive, proactive two-way communication is essential.
Language	Be clear and concise, thoughtful and honest; use plain everyday language; provide considered, positive responses. Ask open questions. Do not use acronyms or clever sentences that do not encourage a response. Do not use condescending language.
Honesty	Be clear about what you and your organisation can and can’t do. If you commit to something it must be fulfilled; if it cannot be fulfilled, provide an explanation beforehand. Failure to do this reinforces beliefs that agencies do not care and leads directly to loss of trust, apathy and failure.
Commit	The Risk Management Authorities should commit to the Flood Action Groups and show they are investing in the maintenance of the partnership with the communities.
Flexibility	Avoid preconceived ideas about what the community or individuals need.
Equity	Everyone in the community and Flood Action Group should be able to share their concerns in equal measure. That may mean managing those who claim to represent people, or those with the loudest voices and who may prevent quieter people speaking. We recommend to actively engage with everyone.
Equality	Communities should be seen as equal partners and their local knowledge should be valued. Include them in your discussions and consultations as they are expected to manage their personal flood risk as community.
Respect	Always respect the reaction and behaviour of people in communities. Apparent disinterest, apathy or anger may be a coping mechanism. People in Flood Action Groups have the greatest vested interest in managing their flood risk. Remember that they are the <u>only</u> ones who will suffer the impacts of flooding. For everyone else this is part of their professional work and they go home to a dry, risk free home.

Table 4.2: Stages of community engagement and formation of Flood Action Groups that work autonomously in partnership with the Risk Management Authorities

Engagement Objectives	Actions	Indicators
STAGE 1		
Forming the group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with individuals • Discuss with individuals setting up a flood group • Organise a meeting of interested parties • Allow the community to off load/listen • consolidate a group 	A group in place with a chair
Communication with the wider community	Support the group to gather information from the wider community on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of flooding • Flood risk issues 	Evidence of wider community engagement by the group
Articulating the flood risk issues	Focusing the group on a positive and productive way forward Gathering the issues generated from the wider community to develop a flood action plan	A list of issues agreed by the group
Understanding roles and responsibilities of organisations	Through discussion at meetings, generate a common understanding of the roles and responsibilities of FRMAs and other organisations.	Session completed with the group
Ability to work with partners	Through discussion at meetings agree how the group will work with FRMAs and other organisations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set up a Multi-Agency Meeting date • send out invitations with agenda and Flood Action Plan • support the group through their first meeting 	Multi-agency meeting
STAGE 2		
Multi-Agency Meetings	Organise and support the group to lead and chair Multi-agency meetings to work through the issues identified by the community	Multi-agency meetings
Start to introduce and steer towards proactive work	Identify actions that the group can, and wish to, take forward, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Resilience Plan • Planning and development issues • Riparian management • Insurance • Natural Flood Risk Management 	Work programme introduced
Working with the group to undertake proactive work	Group delivers its work programme	Work programme started

One of the most important lessons learned throughout this project for all partners is an understanding of the length of time required for effective and meaningful engagement. Identifying the needs of the communities, listening to their concerns and working with them at their own pace to manage flood risk and embed resilience was a key factor to the success of this project. From the outset, the National Flood Forum advocated flexibility in community engagement and was supported by project partners who recognised that 'one size does not fit all'. Flood Action Groups were supported to first discuss their sources of flooding and how they could work with Flood Risk Management Authorities to reduce their risk, before developing Flood Emergency Resilience Plans.

Conversely, one of the main factors of successful community engagement in Surrey was through the Flood Risk Management Authorities representation at Multi-Agency Meetings, led by Flood Action Groups. During the first stages of engagement this was determined to be resource intensive (staff needed to attend meetings, source and provide information, etc.) and this was communicated to Flood Risk Management Authorities from the outset.

The lessons learned about community engagement therefore are:

LESSON 1: Engagement with community groups takes time

LESSON 2: Multi-Agency Meetings need to be led by Flood Action Groups

LESSON 3: The initial stages of engagement can be resource intensive for Risk Management Authorities

4.2 Mental Health and Flooding

Throughout the project the National Flood Forum spent a lot of time with the Flood Action Groups listening to their experience during the flood events and their concerns. This revealed the trauma, mental stress, anxiety and devastation they experienced, and brought back memories as well as exposing the fear of future flooding events.

Everyone has a very different capacity to cope with flooding and the knowledge of still being at risk of such an event occurring again. Some Flood Action Group members were quite vulnerable to being reminded of the flood event and the emotional trauma linked to it. In some situations, this led to a level of stress and mistrust, as well as misunderstanding and misinterpreting information that was provided by the Risk Management Authorities.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Recognise the distressing effect of flooding experienced by flooded communities and, when necessary, advise to seek support from mental health professionals

A consequence is that groups may be impatient to see progress and their expectations of the flood Risk Management Authorities, during and after Multi-Agency Meetings, can be quite high. Progressing actions quickly is often key for the groups. It is important that Flood Risk Management Authorities recognise this and engage with a sensitive and understanding approach, as well as managing expectations. This can also help to build and manage trusted relationships and reduce stress.

The Risk Management Authorities in Surrey raised the profile of the [REDACTED] and the [REDACTED] Flood Action Groups as they recognised that some members showed signs of anxiety and stress during Multi-Agency Meetings. In a sensitive and respectful way, the staff and officers within all Risk Management Authorities involved should be made aware of the issues and commit to show regular support via Multi-Agency Meetings. A steady, consistent approach and methodology, avoiding introducing different approaches will help to manage expectations and encourage partnership work.

The lesson learned about mental health and flooding throughout this project is:

LESSON 4: Stick to Multi-Agency Meetings and a consistent approach and methodology

4.3 Resilience planning

Traditionally, contingency planning and incident management is organised in a hierarchical manner, with central Government taking a leading role in major incidents, but with organisations operating in localities delivering services. Communities, whether or not tied to particular places, are identified as being key, but are often an overlooked resource in both proactive and reactive phases of emergency management (Murphy, 2007). Community members can and need to be active agents rather than passive victims, providing an important corrective to the predominant top-down approach that often dominates in emergency management (Dynes, 2002).

When undertaking community resilience plans with a community group, the main concern raised by Flood Action Groups was the generality of existing templates from agencies and authorities. The perception remains that these plans are less suitable for certain situations or individuals and communities. The experience of [REDACTED] Flood Action Group demonstrated that it is important to have the right processes and support in place alongside appropriate templates.

LESSON 5: A template does not always assist a community unless the necessary support and coaching is provided in its development

However, as already mentioned in sections 1.3 and 2.3, it is crucial for Flood Action Groups to build a foundation of confidence and trust before developing and writing Flood Emergency Resilience Plans. This will ensure that the group understands the role of the community and the Flood Risk Management Authorities, and the capital schemes and flood management strategies in place in their area. If a group decides to start writing a Flood Emergency Resilience Plan, the Flood Risk Management Authorities may wish to support the process by taking an advisory role, but the focus of the plan should be dictated by the group, taking account of their capacities and capabilities. One size does not fit all – each group will develop their own Flood Emergency Resilience Plan if they are ready.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Flood Action Groups need to build a foundation of confidence and trust before writing Flood Emergency Resilience Plans

The National Flood Forum utilises mix-and-match templates to build a Flood Emergency Resilience Plan that caters to the individual needs of each community. The templates are highly visual and concise in order to engage users and limit long-term printing costs. The National Flood Forum Emergency Resilience Plan templates have been developed with

community Flood Action Groups, and utilised and evaluated through the DEFRA Community Flood Resilience Pathfinder Project (DEFRA, 2015). To enable tailored Emergency Resilience plans to be achieved, the National Flood Forum provides intensive support for community groups wishing to write community flood resilience plans, to facilitate their own planning of effective and realistic coordinated actions in response to appropriate triggers.

***RECOMMENDATION 3:** For communities to facilitate their own coordinated actions during and after a flood, they require intensive support when writing their Flood Emergency Resilience Plan of the type provided by the National Flood Forum*

To ensure the Emergency Resilience Plans are aligned to any existing multi-agency flood plans in place by the local agencies and authorities, a Flood Action Group could hold a Multi-Agency Meeting with representatives from the Environment Agency Resilience Teams, the Surrey County Council Emergency Management Team and local Emergency Planning Officers from the District or Borough Council.

***RECOMMENDATION 4:** Hold Multi-Agency Meetings with representatives of the Risk Management Authorities and the Emergency Planning Teams when groups write resilience plans*

4.4 Project Management

4.4.1 Engagement Area Selection

At the beginning of this project in June 2016, representatives from Surrey County Council, the Environment Agency and Applied Resilience met to discuss and decide the areas of engagement for the National Flood Forum. This process proved useful to ensure that all partners were on board with the areas selected and the intention of creating resident-run Flood Action Groups. The Environment Agency was working in the [REDACTED] area before 2016, although the engagement work was challenging. Together with the National Flood Forum and Surrey County Council, it was possible to set up a Flood Action Group that took on board the work process defined in this report.

4.4.2 Steering Group Meetings

Representatives from both the National Flood Forum and Surrey County Council attended project board steering group meetings on a quarterly basis to ensure that the project remained focussed on the deliverables and timescales. Additional representatives from other agencies would have been advantageous, bringing about joint ownership of the process and support for the project aims. It would have provided partners with the opportunity to align the approach taken with Flood Action Groups in a transparent manner and with greater understanding, a factor which was recognised to be a challenge throughout the project.

***RECOMMENDATION 5:** Include all representatives of the Risk Management Authorities during steering group meetings to foster mutual understanding of the approach taken with Flood Action Groups and the challenges faced during the project*

4.4.3 Partner Collaboration

Throughout the project, the National Flood Forum always ensured that any barriers identified were shared with Surrey County Council representatives from the outset. This has engendered a positive and collaborative working relationship between the two partners. It has ensured that any possible risks to the project were dealt with head on.

LESSON 6: Challenges were always shared with Surrey County Council and helped to ensure a pro-active and collaborative partnership

RECOMMENDATION 6: Regular steering group meetings throughout the project will benefit from inclusion of all other relevant partners involved in flood risk management to be able to manage project risks

5. FLOOD ACTION GROUP NETWORKING: THE WEST SUSSEX MODEL

Surrey County Council became aware of the West Sussex Flood Action Group Forum formed by the National Flood Forum and its support from the West Sussex County Council. This section aims to inform Surrey County Council about the West Sussex Model.

5.1 Aim of the West Sussex Flood Action Group Forum

West Sussex Flood Action Group Forum was initiated during the Defra Flood Resilience Community Pathfinder project between 2013 and 2015. It is still operating and continues to develop. The primary aim of the West Sussex Flood Action Group Forum (WSFAGF) was to create a space where flood action groups could meet, share experiences, support each other and develop common agendas.

One of the unique features was the representation of the Forum on the West Sussex Strategic Flood Risk Management Board. This allowed Flood Action Groups to steer their flood risk management priorities in West Sussex and engage in strategic decision making and for a better flow of information about key decisions to reach Flood Action Groups.

These two elements contributed to two objectives

- To encourage the establishment of the WSFAGF to support the sustainability of Flood Action Groups and to provide peer to peer support for further development;
- To provide transparency on how Risk Management Authorities manage flood risk in West Sussex and to provide communities with the opportunities to contribute to the process of flood risk management.

5.2 Facilitation of the establishment of the West Sussex Flood Action Group Forum

To encourage networking between Flood Action Groups in West Sussex, the National Flood Forum coordinated an annual event with the purpose of celebrating successes, achievements and sharing lessons. Indirectly, these events supported the development of relationships between the groups and provided them with the opportunity to promote their community work to the Risk Management Authorities and the wider public. This event provided an opportunity to promote and launch the West Sussex Flood Action Group Forum. The National Flood Forum introduced seventeen

Flood Action Groups to the concept and gained agreement and enthusiasm. The annual event was structured to include an open public event (including table presentations and a networking opportunity) which was then followed by a closed, inaugural meeting for the Flood Action Group representatives to discuss the Terms of Reference, membership and structure of the Forum.

Following the inaugural meeting, the elected temporary chair supported by the National Flood Forum arranged the first official meeting of the Forum. Each Flood Action Group discussed who they were, what they had achieved as a group, their key flooding issues and what they would like out of the Forum. The group members were then able to identify commonalities and priorities which would then be discussed and developed at future meetings and which could then be taken forward by the two elected representatives to the West Sussex Strategic Flood Risk Management Board.

5.3 Outcomes of the West Sussex Flood Action Group Forum

The main outcomes were:

- ✓ More mainstreamed community involvement in flood risk management at a strategic level.
- ✓ More effective communication and collaborative working between Flood Action Groups to ensure that ideas, information and experiences can be shared between communities.
- ✓ Flood Action Groups are better informed on the Local Strategy for Flood Risk Management and its delivery
- ✓ Regular discussions about ongoing operational issues with West Sussex County Council
- ✓ Communities are involved alongside other key players in discussions about flood risk management.
- ✓ Opportunities to influence partner strategies, resource allocation and external funding.
- ✓ More effective engagement with other partners, such as Southern Water.

Surrey County Council showed interest in developing a Flood Forum in Surrey after becoming aware of the West Sussex Flood Action Group Forum. From the outset point, this is still feasible, but there are two aspects that need to be taken into consideration:

- The timeframe of two years of the Surrey Community Flood Resilience Project provided time to engage with local communities and support them to create Flood Action Groups and organise Multi-Agency Meetings, with the aim to make this process sustainable and for the groups to work independently. However, the West Sussex Flood Action Group Forum took almost six years to develop.
- The Flood Action Groups mentioned throughout this report are still in early stages and their focus remains the collaborative work process achieved via Multi-Agency Meetings. The six Flood Action Groups created in Surrey will require support from additional new or existing Flood Action Groups to show a better representation of communities working on flood risk management in Surrey. The West Sussex Flood Action Group Forum is represented by a total of seventeen Flood Action Groups.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The objective of the Surrey Community Flood Resilience Project was to develop self-sufficient community resilience groups using specific community engagement methodologies in agreed locations across the county. This was delivered in partnership with key agencies to raise awareness and understanding of flood risk and encourage local communities to take the lead and identify opportunities to reduce their flood risk and become more resilient. New Flood Action Groups were created and, together with their communities, identified and started to implement local measures to reduce flood risk.

Six Flood Action Groups were established and developed their own flood action plans. They regularly led and held Multi-Agency Meetings. Some Flood Action Groups started to undertake further proactive work such as the development of emergency plans and information sharing with the wider community (riparian owners, planning and development, ditch maintenance work) (Table 4.2).

Over 80% of the members within the Flood Action Groups established in Surrey showed a better understanding of their flood risk and felt better informed about the management of flood risk in their area due to the conversations during the Multi-Agency Meetings. They felt that they had received support, signposting and practical advice regarding all topics relating to flood risk by the National Flood Forum and the Risk Management Authorities. They also felt that they had built positive partnerships with the Risk Management Authorities and were confident that they will at some stage write their own Flood Resilience Emergency Plan (see Recommendation 3 and 4).

The essential lessons learned during this project and recommendations are listed below:

- *Lesson 1: Engagement with community groups takes time*
 - *Lesson 2: Multi-Agency Meetings need to be led by Flood Action Groups*
 - *Lesson 3: The initial stages of engagement can be resource intensive for Risk Management Authorities*
 - *Lesson 4: Stick to Multi-Agency Meetings and a consistent approach and methodology*
 - *Lesson 5: A template does not always assist a community unless the necessary support and coaching is provided in its development*
 - *Lesson 6: Challenges were always shared with Surrey County Council and helped to ensure a pro-active and collaborative partnership*
-
- ✓ **Recommendation 1:** Recognise the distressing effect of flooding experienced by flooded communities and, when necessary, advise to seek support from mental health professionals
 - ✓ **Recommendation 2:** Flood Action Groups need to build a foundation of confidence and trust before writing Flood Emergency Resilience Plans
 - ✓ **Recommendation 3:** For communities to facilitate their own coordinated actions during and after a flood, they require intensive support when writing their Flood Emergency Resilience Plan of the type provided by the National Flood Forum

- ✓ **Recommendation 4:** Hold Multi-Agency Meetings with representatives of the Risk Management Authorities and the Emergency Planning Teams when groups write resilience plans
- ✓ **Recommendation 5:** Include all representatives of the Risk Management Authorities during steering group meetings to foster mutual understanding the approach taken with Flood Action Groups and the challenges faced during the project
- ✓ **Recommendation 6:** Regular steering group meetings throughout the project will benefit from inclusion of all other relevant partners involved in flood risk management to be able to manage project risks

In addition, the guiding principles in Table 4.1 should assist organisations in Surrey to engage successfully with communities and Flood Action Groups.

All the Flood Action Groups created through this project were still very much in their early stages of development, where addressing their flood risk concerns, imparting their local knowledge to flood risk managers and working in partnership to address many of the issues through their Multi-Agency Meetings was at the forefront of their agendas. The following key risks were identified and need to be considered by the Risk Management Authorities when engaging with the Flood Action Groups:

- Meetings outside of the Multi-Agency Meeting approach: strict guidelines and a precise routine will enable sustainability within the Flood Action Groups and avoid diversions from the engagement process.
- Communication with an individual: Communications need to happen collectively with the whole Flood Action Group to avoid misunderstanding and misinterpretation of information.
- Written answers between Multi-Agency Meetings: The Risk Management Authorities need to be aware that providing written answers will eventually raise more questions that need addressing by everyone involved in the Flood Action Group and the Multi-Agency Meetings
- The Flood Action Group knows best how to engage the wider community and will convey key information to residents in and around the flood risk areas.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – FLOOD ACTION GROUPS AND FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARTNERSHIP WORK

This section is dedicated to highlighting what has been achieved in the areas where Flood Action Groups have been formed.

A.1. [REDACTED] Flood Action Group

On the 7th June 2016, a flash flood event occurred in [REDACTED]. The areas affected included [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Surface water flooding also affected areas in the [REDACTED] including [REDACTED]. The rainfall event was localised and one and a half times the total June average rainfall fell over a two-hour period in the [REDACTED] area. The flooding event was therefore primarily a result of surface water flooding. This flooding incident overwhelmed the local drainage infrastructure resulting in over 86 properties suffering internal inundation and 63 properties suffering external floods in their garages and gardens and the ability to move in and out of the area. Many of the internal property floods included sewage (Surrey County Council, 2016).

The National Flood Forum was commissioned by Surrey County Council to support those residents that had flooded. Having worked for many years across several flooded areas in the UK the National Flood Forum had the specialist support, knowledge and understanding to help people recover their quality of life after a flood. The National Flood Forum took their recovery trailer directly into a flood-hit area enabling easy access and provided immediate help and support; this was achieved in partnership with Surrey County Council, [REDACTED] District Council, Thames Water and the Environment Agency. The National Flood Forum also organised a series of surgeries to provide specialised support and advice on insurance, and property resilience and resistance. Home visits were also made as part of the recovery service.

In August 2016, the National Flood Forum facilitated the setup of the [REDACTED] Flood Action Group for the area. This Flood Action Group held their first Multi-Agency Meeting in December 2016 and held subsequent meetings in March 2017, September 2017 and May 2018. Their Multi-Agency Meetings comprised representatives from the National Flood Forum, Surrey County Council (Flood Risk Management Team, Highways and Planning), [REDACTED] District Council (the Chief Executive, Planning, Emergency Planning), [REDACTED] Borough of [REDACTED] (Highways and Planning), Thames Water (Network Maintenance and Planning) and the Environment Agency (Partnership and Strategic Overview).

The Flood Action Group was supported to develop a rolling Flood Action Plan highlighting many of the community's local issues and concerns which included the maintenance of the highways gullies and assets, water attenuation and maintenance of the sewer network. Time was a key factor in working with the group to show the benefits of a positive, forward thinking partnership approach and circumvent some contentious members.

Through the partnership maintenance work was undertaken by the relevant flood management teams. Surrey County Council commissioned [REDACTED], before the flooding event in June 2016, to undertake a surface water management survey,

with the report published in April 2016. The Flood Action Group organised and hosted an information gathering day, in partnership with Surrey County Council and [REDACTED] as outlined in section 2.1.1 (Figures 2.1 and 2.2).

In conjunction with the [REDACTED] Parish Council the Flood Action Group created a Flood Emergency Resilience Plan. This was achieved through a workshop held in September 2017, which explored hazards affecting [REDACTED], where the barriers are in terms of resilience planning, and how these barriers can be overcome.

[REDACTED] Flood Action Group was able to highlight their activities and achievements and expand their membership. They attended two community events in the Summer of 2017 to promote the feasibility study, referring people still recovering from the effects of flooding last year to the National Flood Forum and further information about the Flood Action Group as outlined in section 2.1.1 (Figure 2.3). The Flood Action Group also shared their observations and comments to the National Planning Policy Framework public consultation in February 2018 concerning the management of surface water in flood risk areas, the implementation of SuDS, the regulation of waste water connections, and planning and development concerns in flood risk areas. As a further action, the Flood Action Group wrote a letter to the MPs for [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], raising a series of policy related questions linked to the topics mentioned in their National Planning Policy Framework. Although replies were received from DEFRA and the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government the Flood Action Group are still planning to invite MPs to a meeting to discuss potential changes in policy.

A.1.1 Recommendations for further support

- The [REDACTED] Flood Action Group are organising Multi-Agency Meetings themselves and we recommend the Risk Management Authorities commit to supporting them by participating in the meetings and contributing to agreed actions, thereby helping to foster and further develop the valued partnership working.
- The Flood Action Group has a competent Chair and the National Flood Forum has supported them throughout the project to enable an environment conducive to positive partnership working.
- We recommend that the Risk Management Authorities avoid communicating via email as a response to the group as this undermines the Multi-Agency Meeting approach demonstrated in the miscommunications experienced and a risk of a breakdown in trust in the authorities.
- We recommend the partners to commit to responding to actions agreed during the Multi-Agency Meetings which will then be updated at the next meeting. To ensure motivation and encourage the group to keep working in partnership, those actions need to be followed up.
- A member of the group showed signs of anxiety and mental stress during the Multi-Agency Meetings. This person reached out for medical help and the rest of the group is supportive. It is important to remember the distress that this resident, and others, were subject to during the flood events. We recommend remembering this during Multi-Agency Meetings and to handle the situation accordingly.
- We recommend that the group receives guidance on communication with Risk Management Authorities outside of Multi-Agency Meetings (Members of Parliament, Freedom of Information Requests, opposition to developments, etc.) from the authorities.

A.2. [REDACTED] Flood Action Group

The [REDACTED] Flood Action Group was set up by the National Flood Forum in November 2016. They were supported to develop a rolling Flood Action Plan highlighting the community's local issues and concerns which included the maintenance of the Highways gullies and assets, the [REDACTED] Flood Alleviation Scheme, the temporary demountable defence scheme and the Environment Agency's Flood Warnings Service. The [REDACTED] Flood Action Group held their first Multi-Agency Meeting in May 2017 and held subsequent meetings in September 2017, February and May 2018. Multi-Agency Meetings comprised a partnership facilitated by the National Flood Forum with Surrey County Council (Flood Risk Management Team and Highways), [REDACTED] Borough Council (Drainage Engineering, Project Management and Emergency Planning), Thames Water (Network Maintenance) and the Environment Agency (Partnership and Strategic Overview).

Since their first Multi-Agency Meeting, the [REDACTED] Flood Action Group have discussed with the Environment Agency the XXX Scheme and the temporary demountable defences in more depth. This allowed the Flood Action Group to ask questions in a constructive environment.

The [REDACTED] Flood Action Group has also been working with [REDACTED] Borough Council's Emergency Management Team to develop a Flood Emergency Resilience Plan. However, this had adverse effects on individuals within the group, and the attempts to complete this became an ordeal, compounding the stress and trauma that was still raw after the flooding suffered. After much negotiation, it was decided to encourage the group to abandon development of the Flood Emergency Resilient Plan and to refocus on the Flood Action Plan. The Flood Action Group has gone on to undertake an awareness raising leaflet drop exercise in their wider community instead. As a bespoke diversion from the normally adhered to engagement structure it was agreed that the Flood Action Group would benefit from meeting with the Environment Agency outside of a multi-agency meeting to receive a regular briefing about the Strategic Outline Business Case for the [REDACTED] Flood Alleviation Scheme.

A.2.1 Recommendations for further support

- The Flood Action Group has never chaired their Multi-Agency Meetings without the National Flood Forum present. We recommend that, due to certain obsessive behaviours within this group, they will manage better working within strict guidelines and a precise routine to enable sustainability in the future. We recommend avoiding meetings out of the Multi-Agency Meeting approach to ensure the group is not steered into a different direction (see Chapter 2.3).
- We recommend supporting the chair by attending and preparing for the Multi-Agency Meetings. Until recently the Flood Action Group has used the method of a rotating chair for their Multi-Agency Meetings, but they now have a permanent Chair.
- The Flood Action Group has shown interest in planning an awareness day, however, they feel unsure about their capacity, so will need support and encouragement from the Risk Management Authorities (but not ownership by them) when the group is ready to start the process of planning and preparing for this event.

- We recommend that all conversations are made collectively with the whole Flood Action Group. One of the members is vulnerable to stress, misunderstanding and misinterpreting information. As one of the most active members of the Flood Action Group the authorities need to be aware of the risk it poses to provide written answers or diversions from the engagement process (offering meetings outside of Multi-Agency Meetings) directly.
- This group still requires support and guidance with their Flood Action Plan and Multi-Agency meetings from partners.

A.3. [REDACTED] Flood Action Group

Residents in [REDACTED] were flooded during the winter storms of 2013/2014. Following this flooding event, the local County Councillor formed and chaired a Flood Forum which had residents involved. However, the Flood Forum was disbanded, and residents were then left without a way of working in partnership with flood risk management authorities. As part of the project the National Flood Forum enabled the setup of the [REDACTED] Flood Action Group in November 2016 run by residents in flood affected areas. Support was given to develop a Flood Action Plan highlighting many of the community's local issues and concerns which included, the maintenance of the highway gullies and assets, the [REDACTED] Flood Alleviation Scheme, temporary demountable defences, the Environment Agency Flood Warnings service and the maintenance of the [REDACTED] Ditch.

This Flood Action Group held their first Multi-Agency Meeting in May 2017 which comprised the National Flood Forum facilitating the attendance of Surrey County Council (Flood Risk Management Team and Highways), [REDACTED] District Council, Thames Water (Network Maintenance), Sutton and East Surrey Water, UK Power Networks and the Environment Agency (Resilience and Partnership and Strategic Overview). Subsequently, the Flood Action Group hosted two subsequent Multi-Agency Meetings in September 2017 and March 2018. The next meeting is scheduled for July 2018.

This Flood Action Group is very proactive, the chair organises, plans most of the meetings and shows effective engagement to all members of the Flood Action Group. They chair the Multi-Agency meetings and have done so independently from the National Flood Forum. They are a confident and articulate group and pose no concern regards continued support from National Flood Forum. They are positioned well to take things forward sustainably.

A.3.1 Recommendations for further support

- The Flood Action Group intend to undertake an awareness event like the one the [REDACTED] Flood Action Group – we recommend Flood Risk Management Authorities should allow the group to lead this event supported by their presence only at the event.
- We recommend that the authorities strictly adhere to the methodical Multi-Agency Meeting approach and avoid communicating via email as a response to the group and communicate in person during Multi-Agency Meetings. Communication outside of Multi-Agency meetings has been an issue in the past with the Chair

diverting from the engagement approach, leading to the group almost disbanding; guidance and steering has been required on how and when to communicate with partners and the importance of retaining the engagement process. This will reduce the risk of miscommunication, develop trust and build on the understanding of a constructive approach.

A.4. [REDACTED] Flood Action Group

The [REDACTED] Flood Action Group was set up by the National Flood Forum in September 2016. The Flood Action Group renamed their group from the [REDACTED] Flood Action Group to their current name. They were supported to develop a Flood Action Plan highlighting many of the community's local issues and concerns which included, the maintenance of the Highways gullies and culverts, the maintenance and riparian ownership of the [REDACTED] Ditch, the temporary demountable defences and the Environment Agency Flood Warnings Service. The Flood Action Group held their first Multi-Agency Meeting in February 2016 and have held subsequent meetings in May 2017, August 2017, February 2018 and April 2018. These comprised a partnership facilitated by the National Flood Forum and including Surrey County Council (Flood Risk Management Team and Highways), [REDACTED] Borough Council (Drainage Engineering and Emergency Planning), Thames Water (Network Maintenance), [REDACTED] and the Environment Agency (Resilience and Partnership and Strategic Overview). The next meeting is scheduled for July 2018.

The [REDACTED] Flood Action Group lead an awareness day on 10th October 2017. The event was supported by the Risk Management Authorities; 200 residents attended. There was an overwhelming consensus that the Environment Agency's planned temporary defences were not high enough when compared to the flood levels during February 2014 and as a result, the Environment Agency took the decision to remodel the defences with the intention of raising their current defence levels. Flood Action Groups across Surrey have taken on board this example of best practise and would like to replicate it.

The Flood Action Group expressed interest in a Flood Emergency Resilience Plan and is working with the Environment Agency to realise this, but through establishing a flood warden network, instead of a plan. The Flood Action Group works on this with the Environment Agency outside of the Multi-Agency Meetings.

The Flood Action Group is very proactive and has chaired Multi-Agency Meetings independently of the National Flood Forum. New people have joined the group that were not familiar to the process of working in a Multi-Agency Meeting environment. However, the Flood Action Group clearly imparted their approach leading to members agreeing and staying or leaving the group.

A.4.1 Recommendations for further support

- Communications with the Risk Management Authorities outside of the Multi-Agency Meetings has been a problem in the past. We recommend that the Risk Management Authorities follow the engagement process and only provide updates during Multi-Agency Meetings.

A.5. Flood Action Group

Residents in were flooded during the winter storms of 2013/2014. Following this flooding event, the Parish Council Chairman formed and chaired a Flood Forum which involve residents. However, due to certain issues the Flood Forum was disbanded, and residents were left without a way of working in partnership with the flood risk management authorities. As part of the project The National Flood Forum facilitated the setup of the Flood Action Group in September 2017 run by flood affected residents. The National Flood Forum supported the group to develop a Flood Action Plan highlighting many of the community's local issues and concerns which included the maintenance of the highway gullies and assets, the Flood Alleviation Scheme, the sewer networks and pumping stations and the maintenance of the local ditch network.

This Flood Action Group held their first Multi-Agency Meeting in March 2018 comprised of a partnership facilitated by the National Flood Forum and including with Surrey County Council (Flood Risk Management Team and Highways), Highways England, District Council, Borough Council, Thames Water (Network Maintenance) and the Environment Agency (Resilience and Partnership and Strategic Overview). The next meeting is scheduled for June 2018.

A.5.1 Recommendations for further support

- This Flood Action Group is still in its infancy. The engagement process has been instilled in the group and is currently being followed. To ensure the sustainability of the group we recommend that Surrey County Council provide guidance and adherence to the engagement process and encourage the Risk Management Authorities to be involved in the Flood Action Group.
- One Multi-Agency Meeting has been achieved with the support of the National Flood Forum. There is a strong chair in place and the group is proactive and organised. We recommend that the Risk Management Authorities encourage and support the chair of this group.
- The Flood Action Group is motivated and is undertaking actions themselves such as ditch cleaning in the area and communicating with the wider community via posters and Parish Council website to gain opinions and feedback. We recommend this is supported and encouraged.

A.6. Flood Action Group (Area)

On 11th May 2016, a flash flood occurred in the Ditch drainage catchment affecting properties and infrastructure in the areas of . Around 32mm of rain fell in a few hours which caused the main channel of the Ditch to reach capacity quickly and flood the surrounding areas. The neighbouring water sewer networks and gullies were overwhelmed and were not able to drain into the main network. As a result, the network and gullies surcharged preventing rainfall from draining away, causing overland flows and flash flooding of low lying land. There was internal flooding of 45 properties and three schools were closed. In the area, one road was closed (Surrey County Council, 2016b).

The National Flood Forum was commissioned by Surrey County Council to support those residents who had flooded. Having worked for many years across several flooded areas in the UK the National Flood Forum have the specialist support, knowledge and understanding to help people recover their quality of life after a flood. The National Flood Forum took their recovery trailer directly into a flood-hit area enabling easy access and immediate help and support, this was achieved in partnership with Surrey County Council, [REDACTED] Borough Council, Thames Water and the Environment Agency. The National Flood Forum also organised a series of surgeries to provide specialised support and advice on insurance, and property resilience and resistance. Home visits were also made as part of the recovery service.

In November 2016, as part of the project the National Flood Forum facilitated the setting up of a Flood Action Group for the area. The [REDACTED] Flood Action Group has worked in partnership and held their first Multi-Agency Meeting in March 2017. They have hosted three subsequent meetings in June 2017, September 2017 and January 2018. Their next meeting is scheduled for July 2018. Multi-Agency Meetings comprised a partnership facilitated by the National Flood Forum and including Surrey County Council (Flood Risk Management Team and Highways), [REDACTED] Borough Council (Drainage Engineering), Thames Water (Network Maintenance) and the Environment Agency (Partnership and Strategic Overview). Many of the Groups' concerns were heard by partners for the first time. They were supported to develop a Flood Action Plan highlighting the community's local issues and concerns which included the maintenance of highway gullies and assets, water attenuation and maintenance of the sewer network.

The group consists of three residents, but they have been speaking to their community about the Flood Action Group and what they have managed to achieve so far. The Chair left the Flood Action Group in February 2018 which placed the group at serious risk of disbanding in the near future. The National Flood Forum continues to engage with the remaining members of the group in order to support them in their decision about the best way forward.

The area of [REDACTED] where the Flood Action Group is situated ([REDACTED] area) is an area that has suffered from two flood events in quick succession. Certain geographical areas were developed following the 2001 census to facilitate the calculation of the Indices of Deprivation. They are an aggregation of areas (Lower Super Output Areas, LSOAs) with similar social characteristics. Surrey is generally regarded as a wealthy county with a strong economy and low levels of deprivation. But service providers should be aware of the pockets of deprivation that do exist, and the impacts of poverty and deprivation on health and wellbeing and life outcomes. On a scale of average Index of Multiple Deprivation, where 1 is the most deprived, at County level Surrey ranks 150 out of 152. However, [REDACTED] & [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]) (together with [REDACTED] in [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] in [REDACTED]) is on the lowest level of the Index of Multiple Deprivation (defined as decile 2). More than 70% of Surrey's 709 LSOAs are in the least deprived deciles 8, 9 and 10 (Surreyi.gov.uk, 2018).

The community is made up of multiple faith groups, multiple ethnicities and nationalities. Communication with the wider public was challenging due to various factors, the main ones being communication difficulties due to language barriers and a lack of understanding of the social demographics on the area by authorities. The community is close knit, with the local mosque being the focal point of community cohesion. The residents who formed the Flood Action Group stressed that due to the cultural characteristics of the area, it seemed that residents were not interested in any

engagement. However, it is essential to remember the language and cultural differences when engaging with the community to be able to reach every resident that has been affected or is at risk of flooding.

A.6.1 Recommendations for further support

- For this Flood Action Group to continue we recommend that the Risk Management Authorities continue the engagement with the group, despite them being very small, because this group then relays the information to residents in and around the flood risk areas in their unique way.
- We recommend that the Risk Management Authorities continue to develop the Multi-Agency Meeting approach with the Flood Action Group and assist them in incorporating bodies such as the mosque into the engagement process which will allow the wider community to be involved in future meetings and initiatives.
- The Risk Management Partners should commit to attending and supporting the Multi-Agency Meeting process.
- We recommend that the authorities support the activities of the Flood Action Group when they decide to arrange a walk-over with the residents to promote the group and encourage more neighbours to become members.
- We recommend that Risk Management Authorities consider the language and cultural barriers when engaging through the Multi-Agency Meetings.
- This Flood Action Group is in a vulnerable and socially deprived area of Surrey (Surreyi.gov.uk, 2018). We recommend the Risk Management Authorities recognise the unique demographic picture of this community and consider continued support by the National Flood Forum during and between Multi-Agency Meetings. The long-term viability of this Flood Action Group will depend heavily on being supported by the Risk Management Partners in Multi-Agency approach.

APPENDIX B – AWARENESS RAISING ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN

		Location					
Activities	Presented to Councillors	Parish Council Meeting				County Councillor	Parish Council and District Council
	Group formed, followed by group-only meetings	Group created in August 2016 and had 5 group meetings before their 1 st MAM.	Group created in November and had 4 group meetings before their 1 st MAM.	Group created in November 2016 and had 5 group meetings before their 1 st MAM.	Group created in September 2016 and had 6 group meetings before their 1 st MAM.	Group created in November 2016 and had 4 group meetings before their 1 st MAM.	Group created in September 2017 and have had 4 group meetings before their 1 st MAM.
	Multi-agency meetings	Held their 4 th MAM in May 2018	5 th planned for July 2018	5 th planned for July 2018	5 th planned for July 2018	4 th planned for July 2018	2 nd planned for June 2018
	Awareness Events	3 events in total		Has been discussed	October 2017	Want to undertake event in Summer 2018	Has been discussed
	Other Awareness Activities	Website and Facebook		Website and leaflet drop	Emailing list	Website and articles in their local magazines	Updates and articles on Parish Council website
	Resilience Plans have been discussed with group	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	
	Resilience Plan Development	Joint with Parish Council – workshop September 2017		Work was undertaken but has been stopped			

APPENDIX C – RESULTS FROM THE SURVEY SENT BY THE NATIONAL FLOOD FORUM TO FLOOD ACTION GROUPS IN SURREY

	QUESTION	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know	Total
1	I understand my flood risk better.	3	9	3	0	0	0	15
2	I understand and feel increasingly informed of how flood risk is managed.	5	9	1	0	0	0	15
3	I have built positive partnerships with all Flood Risk Management Authorities.		12	3	0	0	0	15
4	My community has informed or supported flood risk management authorities to reduce our flood risk.	1	9	1	1	3	0	15
5	My community has played a positive role in reducing or managing our flood risk.	1	8	4	0	2	0	15
6	I am confident that we have support from the National Flood Forum and the Flood Risk Management Authorities to write a community flood resilience plan for our community if we wish to do so.	2	11	2	0	0	0	15
7	I have received support, signposting and practical advice regarding all topics relating to flood risk.	1	11	3	0	0	0	15

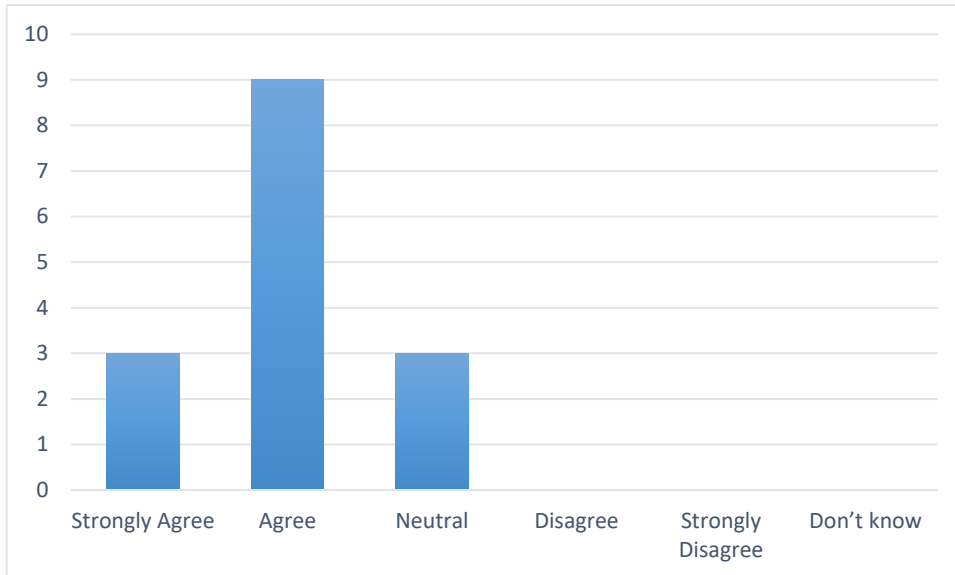


Figure B.1: As a result of the support from the National Flood Forum I understand my flood risk better.

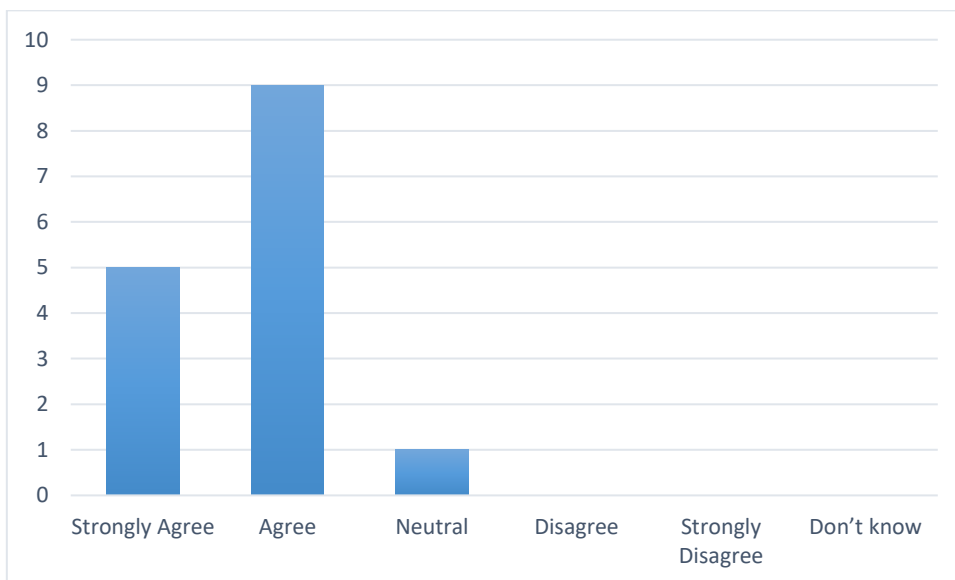


Figure B.2: As a result of the support from the National Flood Forum I understand and feel increasingly informed of how flood risk is managed.

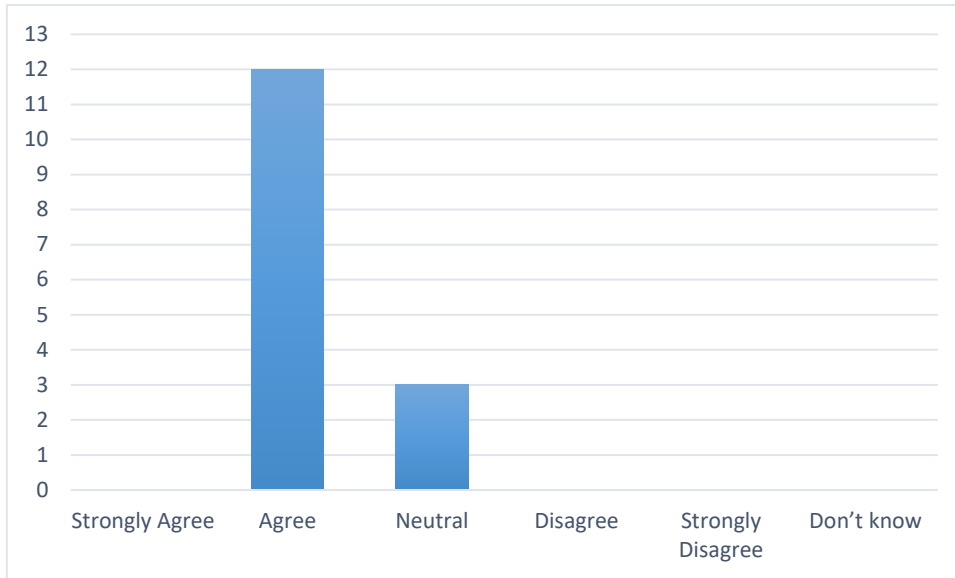


Figure B.3: As a result of the support from the National Flood Forum I have built positive partnerships with all Flood Risk Management Authorities.

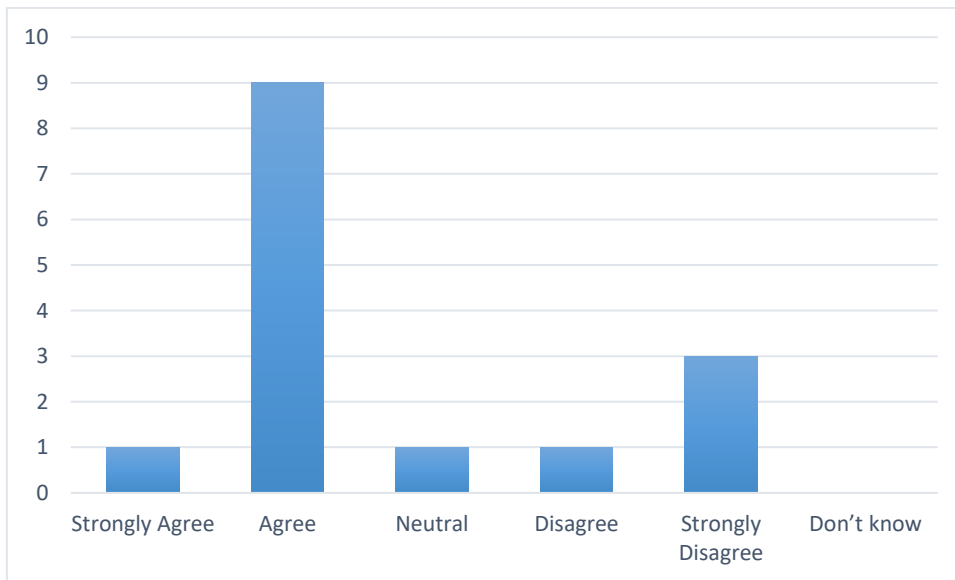


Figure B.4: As a result of the support from the National Flood Forum my community has informed or supported flood risk management authorities to reduce our flood risk.

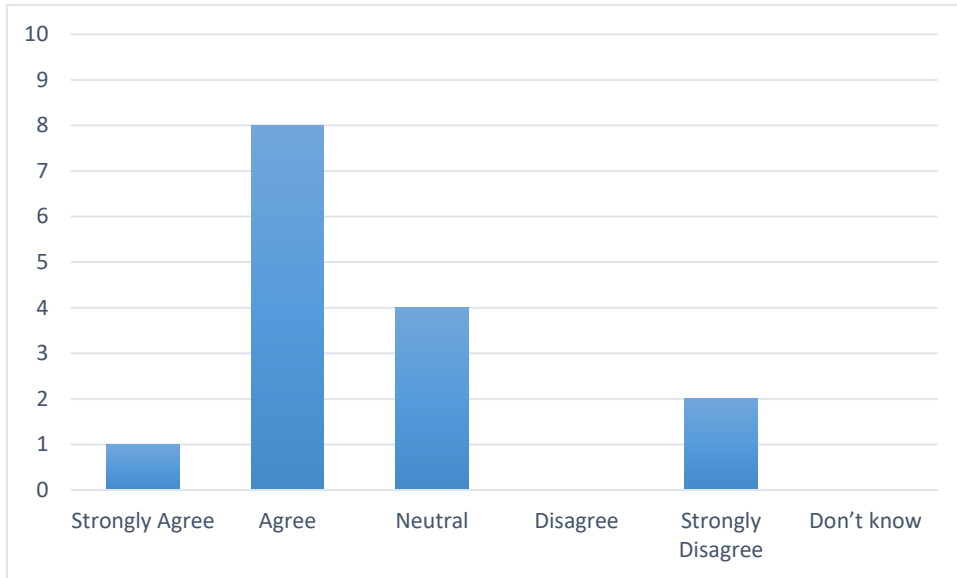


Figure B.5: As a result of the support from the National Flood Forum my community has played a positive role in reducing or managing our flood risk.

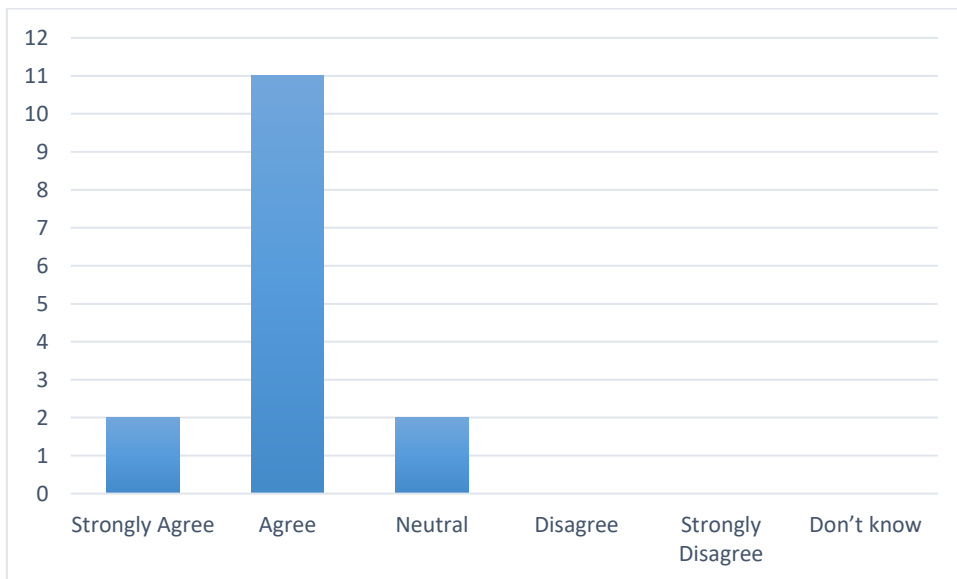


Figure B.6: As a result of the support from the National Flood Forum I am confident that we have support from the National Flood Forum and the Flood Risk Management Authorities to write a community flood resilience plan for our community if we wish to do so.

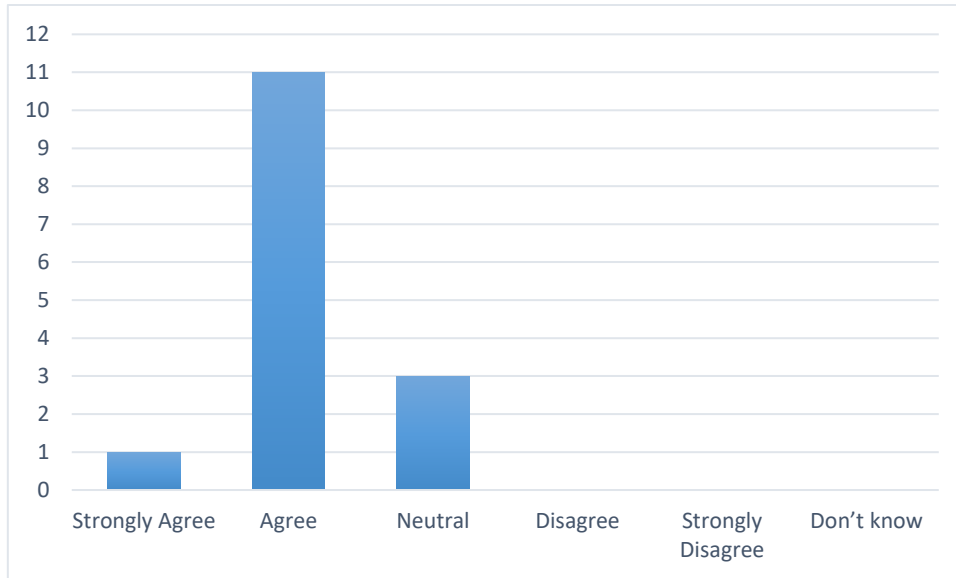


Figure B.7: As a result of the support from the National Flood Forum I have received support, signposting and practical advice regarding all topics relating to flood risk.